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# A Festive Concert

celebrating  
the life of

C. Laughton  
Bird

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30 Sept 1979 (EMC)

## C. Laughton Bird — A Tribute

Laughton Bird was a maverick among music educators, one of the few who dared to face the new. I first met him in 1965, when he gave me the chance to teach a course, which he rather audaciously titled "Musicianship". Often he sat in on my classes — sat is the wrong verb. Laughton never sat: he sprang about on coil springs from one classroom to another, brimming with joy when things began to get moving, fretting when they didn't. He desperately wanted young people to feel the vitality, the excitement, the power they had within themselves to change and improve the world.

It was the energy, the conviction, that I loved and appreciated most in Laughton. Yet these were not his only qualities, nor even his greatest. He was supervisor of an ambitious and expanding music programme with all manner of teachers and students to deal with — and more than that, the administrators to whom he was responsible. He was able to deal with everyone joyfully.

I have witnessed him go after a board of education trustee with the bounce of an Indian rubber ball, in order to get more money for a special music programme. I was with him when he heard a newly-formed chamber music ensemble in the basement of a school — Laughton greeted the children, called them by name, and made them feel important in what, to them, must have seemed a rather fragile vocation.

*Important* — that was a word always on the tip of his tongue. Music was important, teaching was important, persuading people that music was important, was important. I have never met a man so obsessed with the importance of music, particularly in its new and most innovative forms.

Those of us who were fortunate to have worked with Laughton were inspired by his faith and enthusiasm. He lives on in the heart of every musician he knew and challenged. No one could ever forget that voice, full of fire and confidence, "Music is important!"

R. Murray Schafer

## PROGRAMME

### MUSIC BUILDERS CHORUS (of North York)

*Childsong* (Neil Diamond), arr. Elaine Mason

*Simple Gifts*, adapted Aaron Copland, transc. Irving Fine

*Mobile in Five Parts* (creative sound and movement)

Newfoundland Medley, arr. Howard J. Baer:

*The Killigrew's Soiree*

*Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor*

*Squid Jiggin' Ground*

*I'se the B'y That Builds the Boats*

*The Klondike Gold Rush*, arr. Howard J. Baer

ELAINE MASON, conductor

HOWARD J. BAER, accompanist

### LYRIC ARTS TRIO

*Pan*: Harry Freedman

MARY MORRISON, soprano

ROBERT AITKEN, flute

MARION ROSS, piano

### NEXUS

Improvisations

BOB BECKER

BILL CAHN

MICHAEL CRADEN

ROBIN ENGELMAN

RUSSELL HARTENBERGER

JOHN WYRE

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### INTERMISSION

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### JOHN ARPIN

a selection of rag tunes

### PATRICIA BEATTY (Toronto Dance Theatre)

music: *Unanswered Question*, Charles Ives

### ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Chansons de la Nouvelle France, arr. Harry Sommers (dedicated to the people of Acadia):

*L'Hirondelle* (Messagere des Amours)

*Le Tambour*

*Danse, mon moine, danse*, arr. Derek Healey

*Madame Jeannette*, arr. Alan Murray

ELMER ISELER, conductor      MONICA GAYLORD, accompanist

DONALD DAVIS, stage director

FRED PERUZZA, technical director



Further donations to the C. Laughton Bird Scholarship Fund would be gratefully received. Donations should be sent to:

C. Laughton Bird Scholarship Fund  
c/o North York Board of Education  
5050 Yonge Street  
Willowdale, Ontario  
M2N 5N8  
attn: Mr. Lloyd Campbell

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